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**17 ARRESTED ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES
IN SECOND ROUND OF GANG CASE**

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney John K. Vincent announced today that early this morning in Stockton, over 200 federal, state, and local law enforcement officials arrested 17 persons on federal methamphetamine trafficking charges and searched 19 homes, two businesses, and various vehicles, in connection with the federal charges. The defendants arrested, all residents of Stockton, are as follows:

Fernando Martinez (27) E. Wash. St.

Sergio Rodriguez (27) Kingsley Rd.

Filiberto Herrera (25) E. Wash. St.

Joel Oropeza Guzman (30) Gotham Dr.

Eugene Lee Johnson (24) East 9th St.

Hector Hernandez (30) Carmel Ave.

Enrique Sandoval (25) S. Grant St.

Fernando Pineda (26) Sundance Lane

Jeff Michael Allen (30) King St.

George Tafoya (31) West Lane

Jason Monte Allen (26) N. California St.

Emilio Galvan (30) W. 4th St.

Gilberto Jaramillo (27) Turnpike Rd.

Carlos Munoz (21) S. Pilgrim St.

Oscar Dosty, III (32) 1430 San Juan Ave.

Jose Oller (33) Warm Strings Circle

Charles Spencer (21) E. Alpine Ave.

The two businesses searched included New Millennium Auto Sales located on N. Hunter St., Stockton, and Mil's Coffee Shop located on E. Charter Way.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Richard Bender and Mary Grad, who are overseeing the cases, all of the defendants named in the complaints filed in federal court are charged with conspiring to distribute methamphetamine, the distribution of methamphetamine, and/or the possession with the intent to distribute methamphetamine. According to documents filed in federal court, the new charges are based on a series of nineteen undercover drug purchases. Seven of the defendants face minimum sentences of 5 years and maximum sentences of 40 years. Thirteen of the defendants face minimum 10 year sentences and a maximum of life in prison without parole.¹

The investigation is a followup of last August's investigation which resulted in the charging of 17 individuals who were allegedly members of or associated with the South Side Stockton street gang (SSS). Of the 17 persons arrested on federal drug charges last August, ten of the defendants have pleaded guilty and been sentenced to federal prison for between 2½ years and 12 years (with most defendants receiving between 5 and 10 years - there is no parole in the federal system and all defendants face terms of supervised release of three to five years after their release), six defendants still have cases pending, and one defendant's case was dismissed in favor of a guilty plea to related state charges.

¹Those defendants facing a 5 year minimum sentence are: Eugene Lee Johnson, Enrique Sandoval, Joel Oropeza Guzman, George Tafoya, Jose Oller, and Charles Spencer. Those defendants facing a 10 year minimum sentence are: Fernando Martinez, Filiberto Herrera, Jeff Michael Allen, Jason Monte Allen, Gilberto Jaramillo, Oscar Dosty, III., Sergio Rodriguez, Hector Hernandez, Fernando Pineda, Emilio Galvan, and Carlos Munoz.

Vincent stressed that the charges filed today as well as those pending against other defendants charged last August are only allegations and that all of the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The overall investigation began two years ago as part of Operation Peacekeeper. Operation Peacekeeper brought together numerous local, state, and federal agencies to address the problem of youth violence and particularly gun violence in San Joaquin County. As part of that program, a systematic review of homicides committed in Stockton between 1997 and 1999 revealed that a large portion of the homicides involving persons 25 years old or younger was connected to street gang activity or street gang members. As a result, Operation Peacekeeper attempted to inform Stockton's street gang members, through a series of forums and other meetings, that the violence must stop and that law enforcement officials were going to pay particular attention to gang violence.

Vincent stated: "Together with other federal, state, and local agencies, this office is committed to suppressing gang violence. Gang members who engage in violence or illegal drug activity will be pursued, prosecuted, and imprisoned. We are committed to Operation Peacekeeper and its message to stop the violence. Operation Peacekeeper and Project Exile (a program which provides for federal prosecution of felons charged with possession of firearms) demonstrate federal support for the efforts of the Stockton Police Department to combat violence in the streets."

AUSA Richard Bender added that investigations such as this are possible only with the close cooperation of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. He commended the work of the Stockton Police Department, its Gang and Drug Units, CRACNET (Combined Rural and City Narcotics Enforcement Task Force), and Stockton Fugitive Task Force which he said played pivotal roles in the investigation. He also praised the work of the DEA and FBI, which added their resources

and expertise to form a highly effective investigative team.

Law enforcement agencies that were involved in the arrests and searches conducted today include the Stockton Police Department, the Lodi Police Department, the Manteca Police Department, the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement, the HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) Team out of Sacramento (multi-agency task force), the California Highway Patrol, the Stanislaus Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA, a multi-agency task force), the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the U.S. Customs Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Prosecutions will be undertaken by both the San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Direct any further inquiries to Karen Ernst at the U.S. Attorney's Office, (916) 554-2715.

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